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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PESHAWAR 000103

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SUBJECT: IDP CRISIS UPDATE: UN AGENCIES AND ICRC CONVEY IDP NEEDS IN PESHAWAR

REF: ISLAMABAD 1079

CLASSIFIED BY: Lynne Tracy, Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate Peshawar, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

11. (C) Summary: A group of four Peshawar-based representatives from United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) told the Ambassador the rising number of internally displaced people (IDPs) is swamping the capacity of the Pakistani government. The group agreed that the Pakistani armed forces, the federal government, and the NWFP government must provide a realistic timeframe and scope for military operations so that relief entities could properly plan for and meet IDP needs through the remainder of the year. The group agreed that the security situation in camps and host communities was deteriorating as the Pakistani government was not providing adequate protection. The UN and donor agencies are assisting with water, food, sanitation facilities, health care, and education for children. The group echoed reports that we have been hearing that IDPs are beginning to return to Bajaur, facing challenges similar to the massive challenge that the reintegration of the current group of IDPs will pose; the UN and ICRC are also beginning to prepare for possible operations in the Waziristans. End summary.

12. (SBU) On May 19, the Ambassador met with Benno Kocher, International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) Peshawar representative; Mohammed Adar, head of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Peshawar; Ershad Karim, from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and Syed Fawad Ali Shah, the United Nations cluster leader for education, to discuss the needs of IDPs produced by recent military operations in Pakistan.

13. (C) The group agreed that the Pakistani government lacks sufficient capacity to meet the needs of increasing numbers of IDPs. Adar compared the response by the Pakistani government and people unfavorably to his experience in the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, when "the roads were choked" with relief supplies going to the affected zone; he also criticized the government's failure to evacuate Swat residents earlier and in a more orderly fashion. The federal and provincial governments have not coordinated well; at the federal level, the team of officials designated to deal with the crisis was spending its energy on

creating new organizational structures for dealing with the problem rather than using those already in place. The UN and NGOs continued to have issues at the federal level in obtaining visas for their staff. Private relief organizations such as al-Khidamat (Jamaat-i-Islami's charity wing) were stepping in to fill the gap left by the government's disarray.

14. (C) All members of the group were concerned by the security situation, particularly in the camps. Adar claimed there was "growing anger in the camps," noting that aside from unreliable local police, the Pakistani government and military had deployed no forces on a permanent basis to secure the camps. Already, the poor security and rising numbers have made food distribution difficult, due to the "crush" of IDPs attempting to secure rations for themselves. Adar added that a single violent incident, such as an attack on an aid worker, could cause the UN and NGOs to pull out of their roles in the camps.

15. (SBU) These issues aside, the UN and NGOs were able to operate in the area and had begun to address the needs of the IDP population in the area. The group identified water as the primary issue facing the camps, particularly given the rising heat; the IDPs from the most recent round of conflict used more water than those from previous rounds, and UNICEF was scrambling to keep up. It was trucking water in but planned to put distribution systems in place over the next two months. The camps urgently needed generators to run fans and water pumps. UNICEF was also assisting the provision of education to the estimated 800,000 IDP children; it was setting up schools in the camps and employing displaced teachers to give "second shift" classes at existing government school facilities for displaced children living outside the camps. This would not be sufficient, Karim predicted; UNICEF would need large tents with fans, along with books and supplies, to maintain the classes in the summer months. UNHCR was attempting to organize a food bank to regularize distribution of food donations; now carried out in

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a "chaotic" fashion.

16. (C) The members of the group agreed that providing accurate information to IDPs was critical, contrasting taliban FM radio with the spotty communication from the government. The group said that the armed forces, the federal government and NWFP government must provide a realistic timeframe and scope for military operations so that relief entities could properly plan for and meet IDP needs through the remainder of the year.

17. (C) UNHCR's Adar noted that there had been a recent flow of "old" IDPs back to Bajaur from the established camps of Jalozai and Kachagari; ICRC added that IDPs were also beginning to flow back to southern Buner and Lower Dir. The challenges the Bajauris faced were an early sign of the massive arrangements that would need to be made for the eventual reintegration of "new" IDPs. While all of the IDPs had been promised return packages by the NWFP government, those resources had been diverted to the new IDP crisis; however, many of those IDPs who could afford to do so had begun to return to their homes. UNHCR is attempting to gather packages of food and non-food items for 10,000 of the families who are expected to move back to Bajaur in the near future. The group pointed to the experience of Bajaur to underline the need for the government of Pakistan to quickly reestablish a functioning civil administration in Swat and surrounding affected areas after combat operations have concluded, in order to ensure that the militants do not return. The UN and ICRC are also preparing for the outflow from the predicted operations in the Waziristans, which Benno said would be "extremely challenging" owing to the lack of infrastructure in the area and the heavy damage that the area will likely sustain given the time that the militants have had to prepare for a military assault.

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